

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EB-07

TRSE-00 OMB-01 /079 W

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O R 091505Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7800

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

EUCOM

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF JUNE 5 TURKISH
ELECTION RESULTS

REF: ANKARA 4388 (DTG 081010Z JUN 77)

1. SUMMARY: WHILE IT IS TILL TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WHAT
KIND OF GOVERNMENT WILL EMERGE FROM THE INCONCLUSIVE OUT-
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COME OF THE JUNE 5 TURKISH NATIONAL ELECTIONS, SOME ASPECTS
OF THE RESULTS, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, CAN ALREADY BE
DISCERNED. TURKEY'S DEMOCRATIC TRADITION WAS CONTINUED,
AND THERE WAS MOVEMENT TOWARD A MORE STABLE TWO-PARTY
SYSTEM. HOWEVER, THE ELECTION OUTCOME APPEARS NOT TO FAVOR
ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRONG GOVERNMENT CAPABLE OF DEALING
WITH TURKEY'S PRESSING PROBLEMS; ALTHOUGH LEADERS' RESOURCE-

FULNESS MAY GET PRODUCE A SOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE ELECTION RESULTS:

A. THE ELECTION GAVE RENEWED EVIDENCE OF THE STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY. DESPITE EARLY PREDICTIONS OF WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE, THE ELECTIONS WERE HELD PEACEFULLY AND WITH INCREASED VOTER PARTICIPATION, REAFFIRMING TURKEY'S POSITION AS ONE OF THE FEW DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY.

B. WHILE SOME FOREIGN COMMENTARY HAS STRESSED THE VICTORY OF "THE LEFT" (I.E., THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY-- AND PRIMUM DEMIREL HAS EMPHASIZED THE COLLECTIVE RIGHTIST MAJORITY RPP), IT SEEMS MORE IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE ELECTORATE AGAIN GAVE MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF ITS VOTES TO ESSENTIALLY MODERATE PARTIES. FURTHERMORE, THIS TIME ITS VOTES WERE CONCENTRATED ON THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, EACH OF WHICH INCREASED ITS SHARE OF THE VOTE BY ABOUT 8 PERCENT AND ITS SHARE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS BY EVEN MORE. THIS SHIFT SUGGESTS A POSSIBLE TREND TOWARD A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM, WHICH--IF MAINTAINED--COULD WELL ADD STABILITY TO THE TURKISH POLITICAL SYSTEM.

C. ANOTHER POSITIVE ASPECT WAS THE NON-EMERGENCE OF US-TURKISH RELATIONS AS A MAJOR ELECTION ISSUE. ALTHOUGH RPP LEADERS APPEAR INCURABLY CONVINCED OF US OPPOSITION TO THEIR PARTY, NEITHER THE RPP NOR ANY OTHER PARTY MADE ANTI-US RHETORIC A SIGNIFICANT PART OF ITS CAMPAIGN.

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3. NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

A. THE ELECTION FAILED TO PRODUCE EITHER A MAJORITY PARTY OR PARLIAMENTARY ARITHMETIC FAVORING ESTABLISHMENT OF A STABLE COALITION. ALTHOUGH THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES BOTH INCREASED THEIR REPRESENTATION AT THE EXPENSE OF SMALLER ONES, IN THE PROCESS THE TWO MOST MODERATE SMALL PARTIES WERE VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED.

B. SINCE THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES ARE UNABLE TO WORK TOGETHER, THE RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP), WHICH WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR WEAKNESS OF THE LAST TWO COALITION GOVERNMENTS, MAY STILL HOLD THE KEY TO FORMATION OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT EVEN THOUGH IT NOW HAS LESS THAN ONE-HALF ITS FORMER STRENGTH.

C. THE ONE SMALL PARTY TO IMPROVE ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (MORE THAN QUINTUPLING ITS DELEGATION)

WAS THE FAR-RIGHT NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP) WHICH WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE TO THE RPP AS A PARTNER AND A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE IN ANY COALITION LED BY THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP).

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D. BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE TURKEY, THERE HAD BEEN HOPES THAT THE ELECTION WOULD BRING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF WEAK GOVERNMENTS WHICH FOR YEARS WERE UNABLE TO SOLVE THE COUNTRY'S PRESSING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS. THESE PROBLEMS INCLUDE: CYPRUS; THE AEGEAN; TURKISH RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., GREECE, AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY; THE ECONOMY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ELECTION RESULTS APPEAR NOT TO HAVE FACILITATED THE EMERGENCE OF A GOVERNMENT THAT CAN MAKE POLITICALLY PAINFUL DECISIONS. FURTHERMORE,
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MANY OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS MAY BECOME DRASTICALLY WORSE IF NOT DEALT WITH DURING THE WEEKS (OR EVEN MONTHS) WHICH MAY REPEAT MAY BE REQUIRED FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT -- EVEN A WEAK ONE. CONTINUANCE OF WEAK GOVERNMENT IN TURKEY MAY LEAD TO A NEGATIVE REACTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES IF THE IMPRESSION SPREADS THAT THE TURKS ARE UNABLE TO DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEMS. SIMILARLY, THERE MAY BE GROWING DOMESTIC DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DEMOCRATIC SOLUTIONS IF THE COUNTRY IS PERCEIVED TO BE DRIFTING WITHOUT A SERIOUS ATTEMPT BEING MADE AT SOLVING ITS PROBLEMS. IN PARTICULAR, THERE MAY BE AN INCREASED PROSPECT FOR INTERVENTION BY THE MILITARY.

4. HOWEVER, FOREGOING NEGATIVES SHOULD BE BALANCED BY THE REALIZATION THAT TURKISH POLITICIANS CAN ON OCCASION OPERATE WITH CONSIDERABLE RESOURCEFULNESS. WHILE THE PROSPECT FOR THE MOMENT IS A DISCOURAGING ONE, IT IS TOO EARLY TO CONCLUDE THAT ECEVIT'S AND/OR DEMIREL'S RESOURCEFULNESS MAY NOT STILL WORK OUT A SOLUTION WHICH, WHILE SHORT OF PRE-ELECTION HOPES, IS STILL AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE ANKARA GOVERNMENTAL PICTURE OF THE LAST FEW YEARS. THE ODDS OF THIS ARE NOT REPEAT NOT VERY GREAT, BUT IT IS PRE-MATURE TO WRITE THEM OFF ALTOGETHER.
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